

varied treatment. The "house" is, of course, the body, but the "keepers," according to individual taste and knowledge of anatomy among the commentators, are the ribs, or the legs, or the arms, or the hands.

"The clouds" that "return after the rain" are the ever-watery eyes of age, or else the whole sentence is a highly poetical way of saying that old age lacks power to rally from the carelessness that overstrain it. "The clouds return after the rain": It is never sunshine with the old man.

Similarly the "strong men" of verse 3 are variously the arms, the legs, the feet, the bones in general, or (happy thought!) the spinal column whose "bowing" gives to old age its characteristic stoop; while the "grinders," with singular unanimity among commentators are the teeth, and "those who look out of the windows" are the eyes. Prodigality of interpretation in dealing with the "hoors" *shut in the streets*, for those become (at your pleasures), the feet, the lips, the jaws, the eyes, the ears, or even literal doors shut by kindly hands to keep the old man from stumbling over the doorstep or from getting into danger on the street. The bringing low "the daughters of music" is, on one mind, easily define a reference either to old age's loss of voice for singing or to its inability through loss of hearing to distinguish musical notes. Enough! One is tempted to say "You pays your money and you takes your choice." At any rate such a rapid survey of these conflicting and strained interpretations brings out clearly the wisdom of one hard-working commentator who declares of this section, that its allusive references present for us riddles that are not easy to solve.

The next section, the Hebrew sheel (verses 6 to 8), needs no comment to bring out its beauty, but its metaphorical allusions are also somewhat problematic. However, it is not burdened with the same variety of interpretations as was the former section. The "long home" is undoubtedly the Hebrew sheel or underworld of the dead; the "mourners" who "go about the streets" are the paid mourners whose business it is in connection with eastern funerals to bewail the dead. But the "silver cord" and "the golden bowl" are more metaphorical. They refer to life as a light fed with oil from a golden bowl or reservoir like that of Zech. iv., 3, suspended by a silver cord, and they represent life as "going out," when the body is broken by disease or wasted by age as the light goes out when the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl falls as is shattered. The next figure, that of the "pitcher broken at the fountain," and also that of "the wheel broken at the cistern," represents the body as fed from some central "well of life"—being now the broken pitcher that can hold no longer the "living water"—and now the damaged wheel that can no longer raise the refreshing draft from the well. The sentence "Then shall the dust return, etc.," is clearly a reference to the story of man's creation in Genesis ii. 7, but whether Koboehet put into the expression as much meaning as we have learned to do is a matter of doubt, particularly in view of some of his earlier utterances. (See chap. III, 21).

The epilogue or postscript, (verses 8-14), is notable for its fine closing verses already quoted in part, but its literary worth might be safely made to rest upon verse 11 alone. "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well fastened are the words of the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd." "The Preacher" knows the power of the spoken word to goad the lethargic

soul to action or to string the dormant mind into thought, but he knows also the larger power of the "words of masters of assemblies," i.e. of the words of public utterance, and he knows lastly that whatever words of wisdom are spoken by any such come ultimately from "one shepherd"—that great Shepherd of the sheep." There are, it is true, a number of other interesting commentaries on this seemingly callabistic verse, but none that the writer knows are more

satisfactory than the one he has followed.

NOTE.—The above treatment of this "Appeal to Youth" will have served its purpose if it convinces the leader for Dec. 15th, and the third Vice-President that an unusually interesting programme can be prepared for this meeting by getting the members to read up the chapter in all accessible commentaries on Ecclesiastes. The variety of interpretations will in itself challenge interest.

## The Art of Making Others Happy

TOPIC FOR DECEMBER 22.

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THE Sermon on the Mount was preached in Galilee, about seven miles from Capernaum, during the second year of our Lord's ministry. The subject of it was delivered there, not to this mount and spent the time in prayer. It was after this season of prayer that a great multitude came to Him and listened to His wonderful proclamation of love.

When Jesus made this new love law, He told His hearers about those they were to love and how they were to show that love. The Jews, as a people, were great law-keepers. As children they were taught the law or the commandments that God had given to Moses, and a great many others that their rabbis had made. So when Jesus made the new law, He referred to some of the old ones to show the difference. He knew that the Jews had many enemies—the Romans, the Samaritans, and even those of different creeds—and He wanted to teach them that as God is the great Father, all men are brothers and should love one another. He recognized the fact that they had been taught to give "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but He had come to teach them a better way—namely, to love their enemies, to do good to them, to bless them, to preserve a spirit of meekness and forbearance under ill-treatment, to show consideration and unselfishness when they made unreasonable demands, and to refrain from a censorious judgment of them. In other words, they were to do to people just what they wished people to do to them.

This standard of character, which our Master set for His followers, seems to be full of impossibilities, but when we have the love of Christ in our hearts we find that it is possible to begin to live out the impossible things. Anyone can do possible things, but it takes a Christian plus God to do the impossible—to do to others as we would have them do to us. If we, as Epworth Leaguers, would begin, at this Christmas season, to carry out this love law, it would bring happiness to us and to all with whom we came in contact.

A story is told about a king who had a son whom he dearly loved. The prince said everything that he could wish to say, yet he was not happy. One day a visitor came to the palace and seeing the prince said to the king, "I can make your son happy, but you must pay me my own price." The king was delighted and readily promised. Then the visitor took the boy into a private room. He wrote something with a white substance on a piece of paper, gave the boy a lighted candle, and told him to hold it under the paper. The boy did so, and the white letters turned into a beautiful blue. They formed these words: "Do a kindness to someone every day." The prince was so glad that he told his father of the happiness he brought to others he become the happiest boy in the kingdom.

How can Epworth Leaguers bring happiness to others? At this season of the

year they can bring happiness to the Sunday School children by preparing for a Sunday School entertainment. And what a help they may be to the children at every practice and be on time; they can teach the children their parts; they can keep sweet and kind when something goes wrong; they can decorate the church or concert hall; and they can do all in their power to make their entertainment a success in the trust sense of the term.

Epworth Leaguers can bring happiness to parents by teaching their children in the Sunday School. Through these little ones, many of older people whose Sunday School days are only memories, have been led to Christ—and what a change has made in their homes! Oh, Epworth Leaguers, keep close to the little ones. You do not know how much you are doing for them and their loved ones, nor how much they are doing for you.

Epworth Leaguers can bring happiness to the League by being regular and prompt in the attendance; by getting up the best programmes they can; by welcoming strangers; by giving everybody something to do; and by speaking appreciative words to all who have assisted in the meetings. They can be gentle, cheery and sunny. No matter if others do get the sulks, or if they are not so neat shabby; no matter if they do behave like babies, you do not need to sink to their level. Keep up on the heights with God. There you have a better view, and from it you may see that,—

"What looks to your dim eyes a stain  
In God's pure light may only be  
A scar, brought from some well-worn  
field

Where you would only faint and yield."

There may be a reason that they are so easily hurt, so touchy, so hard to get along with—perhaps ill-health or a business trouble, or some other sensible thing, nothing about—God knows all about it, and He cares, and so should we.

Epworth Leaguers can bring happiness to the sick, the sad and the discouraged. Visit them in their homes; take them a few flowers, some fruit or an interesting book, and just watch how your charm works. "People everywhere need nothing so much as kindness."

One evening I saw a teacher cleaning off her blackboard. A yellow spot refused to be erased. She brushed and brushed but the same dull yellow spot remained. All at once she watched how she had been doing—*rubbing out sunshine*. Who does not, at times, make the same mistake? One evening I heard an Epworth Leaguer say, "They did not consult me about the programme, so I'll have nothing to do with it." *Rubbing out sunshine!* Another Epworth Leaguer said, "Did you see me giving him a cold shoulder?" It served him right after the mean way he treated me! *Rubbing out sunshine!* How often we rub the sunshine out of our own lives and those of our friends by our discontent and impatience! As Epworth Leaguers